

GOVERNMENT COMPUTER NEWS

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF GOVERNMENT COMPUTING ■ A CAHNERS PUBLICATION ■ VOLUME 13, NUMBER 17 ■ AUGUST 8, 1994

What's new in
desktop graphics
Buyers Guide begins on Page 77

DOD IT budget takes smaller hit from Senate

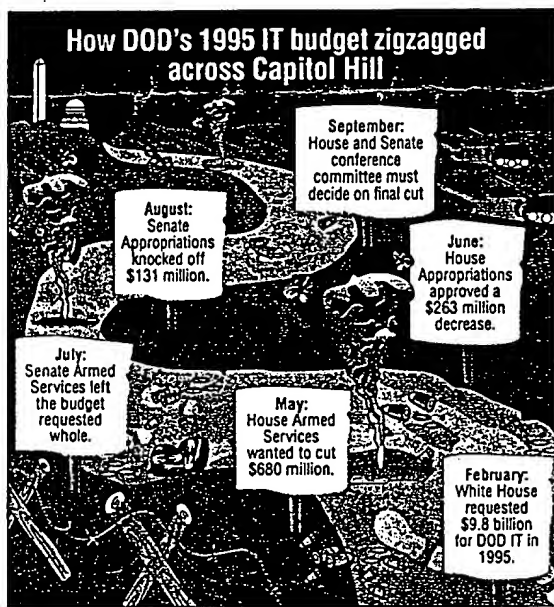
By JOYCE ENDOSO
GCN Staff

At the very least, the Defense Department will have to swallow a \$131 million cut in its fiscal 1995 information technology budget.

The Senate Appropriations Committee cleared the way for the cut when it approved its version of the Defense appropriations bill.

Although large, the Senate reduction is more palatable than cuts sought by House lawmakers. The House Appropriations Committee lopped \$263 million from the department's budget request, and the full House went along with that cut in a June 27 vote.

The House Armed Services see BUDGET Page 90



Vendors fight GSA limit on boxed software sales

Agencies pushed to buy copying licenses

By KEVIN POWER
GCN Staff

Trying to force the repeal of an order limit on shrink-wrapped software sold on Multiple-Awards Schedule contracts, vendors pleaded their case last week before an interagency task force reviewing the issue.

Renato DiPentima, deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration for systems, and members of his Federal Information Technology Acquisition Improvement Team were scheduled to meet last week with members of the Information Technology Association of America to discuss GSA's see VENDORS Page 89

USPS releases prototype specs for universal information kiosks

By TIM MINAHAN
GCN Staff

The Postal Service this week will issue a request for proposals for a prototype information kiosk for use governmentwide.

The kiosks are an answer to the Clinton administration's call for better service to the citizen. The Postal Service was tapped in March by the Government Information Technology Services Working Group to head the interagency kiosk initiative, known as the Government Connection.

That phase, which the Postal Service is financing, will continue through pilot tests of a one-stop government information kiosk [GCN, May 30, Page 71].

In all, the service plans to buy 112 test kiosks.

If the kiosk pilots prove successful, the service anticipates that other

agencies will use a follow-on contract to buy as many as 10,000 kiosk units.

So far, the Postal Service-led kiosk group has remained open to the idea of using more than one supplier if it receives several promising proposals.

The team's RFP calls for kiosks that will be capable of giving the see KIOSKS Page 91

Local phone company has ATM service for feds

By SAM MASUD
GCN Staff

As early as next month, federal agencies in the Washington area could get the first-ever public asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) service provided by a local exchange

carrier. In a tariff filed with the Federal Communications Commission, Bell Atlantic Corp. of Philadelphia said it would offer ATM service at 45 megabits/sec, 155 megabits/sec and various fractional speeds to government sites in the Washington local access transport area.

If the FCC approves, Bell Atlantic plans to begin supplying the service in September to federal agencies and other users authorized by the government.

The first ATM customer could be the Defense Department, which awarded Bell Atlantic the \$600 million Telecommunications Modernization Project (Tempo) contract in November 1991.

Since then, high-speed frame relay, switched multimegabit data service and a LAN interconnection service have been added to Tempo. see ATM Page 93

Federal explorers find a means to an end through virtual reality

By CYNTHIA MORGAN
GCN Staff

ORLANDO, Fla.—Search for tumors inside a living brain. Target budget anomalies in seconds. Quickly find safe positions for your soldiers on a battlefield. Defuse a bomb before it detonates. Rearrange molecules to design a

new drug. Slip inside a copper pipe as it's welded to steel.

In such scenarios, learning by experience is costly, impossible, even fatal. But computer simulation can present a taste of them safely and cheaply. The next step, virtual reality, creates an explorable environment around the see VIRTUAL Page 93

Here's a lean, mean server that's portable—and Energy Star, too

By SEAN GALLAGHER
GCN Staff

Do you move your network server around so much that it should be certified for air drops as well as for NetWare?

If you're a highly mobile LAN administrator or just have limited space, CP&G Technologies sells the server you've probably been wish-

ing for. The CP90 is an Energy Star-compliant 90-MHz Pentium machine built in the United States that is portable, ruggedized and rack-mountable.

An Energy Star server? Sleep mode is the very last thing you'd want in a server. But the CP90 runs so lean that it doesn't need sleep mode to be Energy Star—see SERVER Page 90

INSIDE



Ronald Collison's job at INS: Move systems into the 1990s

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USPS team aims to pull together many kiosk efforts

KIOSK from Page 1

public electronic access to federal, state and local government information and services. President Gore's National Performance Review, released last September, urged agencies to join forces to develop a common public kiosk system.

Postal officials said the intent of the program is to pull together kiosk efforts already

under way at various agencies and build a single national network of kiosk stations.

"The goal is to avoid having an arcade of kiosks from various agencies," said Susan Smoter, the service's kiosk program manager. "Instead, we want to integrate all government information and services into a single kiosk that allows the user to deal with a virtual government through a single interface."

Postal Service officials said they want vendors to be innovative in their proposals. The service was wary of being too restrictive with its specifications, said Andrew Jernell, a USPS procurement specialist. The specifications laid out in the kiosk RFP "are still very fluid," he said.

Under the current plan, would-be kiosk vendors will develop a kiosk hardware platform, build a networked transaction and service environment, and provide an integrated presentation software package.

Extermination of bugs

The Postal Service wants to award the prototype contract this year, perhaps by November. The plan is to work out bugs in the system during an initial test of 12 kiosk stations at the service's Washington headquarters and a handful of field sites.

Once the first dozen kiosks have been approved, Jernell said the remaining 100 kiosks will be installed at field test locations sometime next spring.

The RFP calls for using off-the-shelf products as much as possible. Jernell said the prototypes must accommodate new capabilities as they emerge in the future.

The chief technical features of the prototype kiosk will include interactive multimedia presentations, a touch screen, digital recording and playback of sound and video, and a secure enclosure for the system.

The service plans to integrate the kiosk stations into its Postal Routed Network, a TCP/IP network. All user inquiries will be

routed through a central computer—a mainframe, minicomputer or network server—acting as what the RFP calls the transaction and service manager.

Data reception

The transaction and service manager will receive data from the kiosk stations and direct it to the appropriate agency's host computer. It also will maintain databases of updated information and distribute this data to the individual kiosks; provide operational management of the kiosk stations; handle any billing transactions; serve as the conduit to banking networks and the Internet; and provide security for kiosk communications.

The RFP lists a number of services that the kiosk team expects will be delivered through the kiosk system, from general "who, what, where" government information to specific

personal data. The team wants the kiosks to allow users to search and apply for government jobs; fill out applications for licenses and benefits; print government forms; order and pay for documents and publications; receive benefits electronically; and access tourism and vacation services.

For the early federal agency participants, the most likely candidates are the Agriculture Department, Census Bureau, Commerce Department, Internal Revenue Service, Labor Department and Social Security Administration.

Postal officials would not provide specifics about agencies beyond the federal government that will use the kiosk.

But officials indicated they also expect that a half-dozen local and state government organizations will test offerings on the prototypes.

What the government wants in its kiosks

- At least a 32-bit microprocessor.
- At least a 540M hard drive, at least one 1.44M floppy drive, a CD-ROM drive and a PCMCIA II slot.
- A maintenance keyboard and maintenance software. And, possibly, a user keyboard.
- A multitasking, multithreading off-the-shelf operating system that supports a graphical user interface.
- A communications subsystem that includes a V.32bis or V.42bis internal modem capable of handling transmission speeds from 9,600 bits/sec to 28.8 kilobits/sec and supporting a TCP/IP protocol with FTP capabilities.
- A touch display screen.
- Readers for debit cards and smart cards.
- A printer.
- A suite of commercial software that handles database searches and management, provides an on-line help function, tracks user input and supports user surveys.

Father of POTS contracts and TSC retires from GSA after 30 years

KEVIN POWER
Staff

Rondal R. Leonard, one of the government's top telecommunications contracts manager, is retiring after 30 years of federal service.

Leonard is director of the Technical Contract Management Division in the telecommunications section of General Services Administration's IRM Service.

Known as the father of the Purchase of Telecommunications and Services (POTS) contract and the Telecommunications Support Contract (TSC), Leonard has been involved in numerous other governmentwide telecommunications procurements including the International Direct Distance Dialing and the Nationwide Wiring and Cable Management contracts.

Leonard signed up for GSA's buyout offer and will be leaving IRMS at the end of December. But Leonard said he had planned retiring soon anyway to explore new career opportunities.

"I'm going to miss government service, because I'm having more fun now than ever," Leonard said. "But this was a goal I had in

mind, and I figured the time was right to start on my next career. I've been through a couple of major programs from the ground floor on up, and it's time to enjoy some new horizons."

Leonard began his government service when he joined the Navy in 1958.

During his 21 years in the military, he was a radio technician and communications officer and achieved the rank of lieutenant.

In the beginning

Leonard began his GSA career as a communications management specialist and was named acting director of the Technical Contract Management Division in 1986.

He received the GSA Meritorious Service Award in 1987 for his work in managing the POTS program.

Leonard said communications technology has taken a quantum leap since he began work with GSA. But he recommended his successors stay focused on customer needs and staff support. "Anything you do has to be customer-driven," he said. "But you also have to take care of your people. The job gets done through your people, not at their expense."

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